

Page Denied

The Washington Post E-5
 The New York Times _____
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____

Date 25 MAR 1988

JACK ANDERSON and DALE VAN ATTA

CIA, Cubans in Looking-Glass War

A quiet war of tit-for-tat has been waged for nine months between the Central Intelligence Agency and the Cuban intelligence service, ever since Fidel Castro learned that one of his top spies had defected to the United States.

Last June 6, the most important Cuban agent ever to cross over to the CIA took a car from the Cuban Embassy in Czechoslovakia and drove to Vienna, where he surrendered to U.S. diplomats. He was Maj. Florentino Aspillaga Lombard, 40, who had worked in Cuban intelligence since he was 15.

Our intelligence sources say Castro "went bonkers" when he heard that Aspillaga had defected. But CIA officials also had a reason to go bonkers. As we reported recently, Aspillaga brought with him the news that the CIA had been badly outfoxed by Cuba for more two decades. According to the defector, nearly every spy recruited by the CIA in Cuba since the Bay of Pigs invasion had been a double agent working for Castro.

With Aspillaga in U.S. hands, Castro decided to one-up the CIA before it could use the defector's information. On July 13, a Cuban newspaper printed the names and pictures of U.S. officials it claimed were CIA agents operating out of our diplomatic office there, a U.S. interest section in the Swiss Embassy in Havana.

U.S. officials, angry over the slap at their diplomats, retaliated on July 16 by expelling two Cuban officials from their diplomatic office here, a Cuban interest section.

Castro wasn't finished. He knew that Aspillaga knew about the double agents and the false information those agents had fed the CIA over the years. So he published stories of a half-dozen "heroic" Cuban double agents whom he had planted in the CIA.

The most serious aspect of this underground spy war is that Aspillaga can reveal the names of 350 Cuban agents abroad. Castro knows that and has called some of those agents back home rather than risk their exposure. But to pull them all back would paralyze Cuban intelligence operations for years.

The CIA has picked up important information from Aspillaga about the hierarchy of the General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI). He says it is still under the control of the Ministry of the Interior.

Department ML of the DGI, headed by Col. Ramon Oroza, is the most important, employing about 70 percent of DGI case officers and gathering political intelligence abroad.

Department MZ, headed by Lt. Col. Enrique Miguel Cicard, is one of the most secret because it is responsible for recruiting spies in foreign countries.

Department MG recruits agents in Cuba, attempting to "turn" foreign diplomats, businessmen and ships' captains visiting Havana.

Department MQ is the counterintelligence division, with the job of stopping the CIA from penetrating the DGI.

Department MLL provides the technical gadgetry for the agents.

ICU

The New York Times _____
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____

Date 21 March '88

JACK ANDERSON and DALE VAN ATTA

Cuban Defector Impeaches CIA Spies

The Central Intelligence Agency has been keeping under wraps an embarrassing Cuban spy who defected to the United States last June.

The reason is simple. The spy, Maj. Florentino Aspillaga Lombard, has told the CIA during intensive debriefings that nearly every spy the CIA has recruited in Cuba since the early 1960s has been a double agent, loyal to dictator Fidel Castro.

Aspillaga headed the Cuban General Directorate of Intelligence (DGI) staff in their Czechoslovakian embassy. He left his office in an embassy car on June 6, drove across the border to Austria and turned himself over to U.S. diplomats in Vienna.

The U.S. government often trots defectors around like prizes, but it was weeks before word of Aspillaga's defection leaked out. And when he was finally produced in public, it was not to a battery of journalists, but to the tame questioning of an official arm of the U.S. government: Radio Marti, the station that Voice of America beams to Cuba.

What he had to say in those programs was fascinating, but fluff. The best part was unspoken.

He charged that the Castro regime is corrupt. He claimed Castro has a \$4.2 million Swiss bank account, that his four children live in luxury in Moscow, and that Castro has lavish homes in Cuba's 14 provinces, yachts, and so on.

In a time of housing shortages, Aspillaga said "hundreds of houses" were confiscated for use by Castro's security guards and aides in Havana.

The most important scoop from Aspillaga was

not for public consumption. In top-secret debriefings, he has described in embarrassing detail the Cuban penetration of the CIA's anti-Castro operations.

Aspillaga has spilled enough names and dates that CIA sources know he is telling the truth when he says that most of their agents were loyal to Castro from the beginning or were later turned by the DGI. He maintains this has been the case since the Bay of Pigs fiasco in 1961.

Fabricated information from those double agents was eaten up by the CIA and passed on to Presidents Reagan, Carter and Ford, according to our CIA sources. The CIA now must reevaluate its view of Castro to separate truth from fiction.

By contrast, another Cuban spy who defected nine days before Aspillaga had the red carpet rolled out.

Gen. Rafael del Pino was allowed to speak at length in public about Cuba's involvement in Angola, revealing that 10,000 Cubans had either died or disappeared in that country.

Del Pino said Cuba had sent 40,000 troops to Angola to reduce unemployment, to punish insubordinate and inferior officers, and to pay back debts to the Soviets.

Aspillaga's spicy stories about corruption and high living in the Castro regime are golden propaganda, too, but if the CIA makes a big deal out of his revelations, that will give credibility to Aspillaga's more important news that the CIA was lead around by the nose by Castro for at least two decades.

The Washington Post _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Washington Times _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 The Christian Science Monitor _____
 New York Daily News _____
 USA Today _____
 The Chicago Tribune _____
 RICH. VA News-Leader _____
 Date 10 May 88

EDITORIAL

Pleased to Oblige

Florentino Aspillaga, 40, fled the Cuban intelligence service last year after a quarter-century of service, making his way from his post in Czechoslovakia into Austria. Doubt came to Aspillaga during service in Angola a decade earlier. He told *The Washington Post*: "I saw how our people were dying. I wondered, 'Are we defending Cuba? What are we defending?'" Once in the United States, he talked to the CIA — and the press.

Aspillaga told a by-now-familiar tale about the relationship between Fidel Castro and Manuel Noriega, the Panamanian *hombre* the Reagan administration has struggled so pitifully to depose. Apparently Noriega is no Communist. Instead, his "ideology" is making money. Cuba and the Soviet Union have cash, but need U.S. technology, such as computers.

Noriega can help. Panama's laws make it easy for Cubans (1) to organize

dummy companies with no apparent ties to their nation, (2) to order equipment, (3) to trans-ship it to Cuba or the Soviet Union, and then (4) to fold the companies. In much the same way arms from the United States and other Western countries flow through Panama to Leninist guerrillas across Latin America.

Among other Aspillaga revelations:

- Many Cubans recruited by the CIA remain loyal to their country and work as double agents. Aspillaga spent about about a dozen years as boss of such agents.

- Cuban spies work for the Soviets in the United States. According to Aspillaga, most diplomats assigned either to the Cuban interests section in Washington or to the Cuban UN mission are not diplomats but spies.

Aspillaga covers territory that has become abjectly familiar. Castro and Noriega — and the victorious Sandinistas, and the Democratic Congress — have created for the Reagan administration a horror that will haunt future Presidents. The Reagan administration is dying of a thousand cuts — some inflicted with relative honor by avowed enemies; some by supposed friends. Now, at this late hour, it can do little except stand idly by.

Acquiring the technology the Soviets so desperately seek remains a valuable by-product of American impotence. Castro and Noriega are pleased to oblige.

Defector is 'solid catch,' agencies say

Envoy describes Castro spy efforts

By ALFONSO CHARDY
And LUIS FELDSTEIN SOTO
Herald Staff Writers

U.S. intelligence agencies have concluded that Florentino Azpillaga Lombard, a Cuban diplomat who defected in Europe in June, is a "solid catch" with extraordinary knowledge about Cuban intelligence operations in the United States and around the world, officials familiar with U.S. intelligence information said Tuesday.

"He is a real solid catch," said one of the sources familiar with recent CIA, FBI and State Department assessments of the 40-year-old Azpillaga, who defected June 6 by driving across the border into Austria from Czechoslovakia, where he was based.

"We've been told that his information is first class," said a congressional official who had been briefed recently by CIA counterintelligence officers.

In an interview broadcast late Monday by the U.S. government's Radio Marti, Azpillaga asserted that President Fidel Castro, ignoring the pleas of his Foreign Ministry, has packed the Cuban mission in Washington with intelligence agents while shutting out career diplomats.

Azpillaga said Castro has made the Cuban Interests Section a centerpiece of his vast spy recruitment network in the United States — a move that has made the Foreign Ministry "jealous."

When Vice President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez suggested placing a diplomat at the mission, Castro warned subordinates to "stop pestering him with this," Azpillaga said. "This brought certain friction."

Azpillaga described for Radio Marti a spy recruitment effort in the United States that has spread to university campuses and Cuban exile groups, trying to win the favor of U.S. journalists, scholars and others.

Azpillaga has not been made available to the U.S. press, and neither the White House nor the State Department made any comment about the defector or his allegations.

A spokesman for the Cuban Interests Section denounced Azpillaga's charges as "totally false" and said the mission's activities

The Miami Herald
Wednesday, September 23, 1987

Please turn to DIPLOMAT / 12A

(cont. next p. column 2)

CIA used Cuba's double agents - Mica

FROM COMBINED DISPATCHES

TAMPA, Fla. — The government is re-evaluating two decades worth of intelligence obtained from Cuba after discovering that many sources were double agents working for the Communist government there, according to a Florida congressman.

"A large number of our intelligence activities [in Cuba] involved individuals who apparently were double agents over the past 20 years," said Rep. Daniel Mica, Florida Democrat and chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on international operations.

"There is great concern," Mr. Mica said.

John Gersuk, a spokesman for the congressman, said yesterday that Mr. Mica's remarks over the weekend were based on background briefings he has had in recent days with U.S. intelligence officials.

A CIA spokesman refused comment yesterday, but an administration official familiar with intelligence matters said the CIA and State Department are in the process of reviewing relevant data obtained through their intelligence sources for the past several years.

Reports that a network of CIA agents operating in Cuba were working for the Cuban DGI intelligence service first surfaced on March 25 in The Washington Times, in an interview with former Cuban intelligence officer Maj. Florentino Aspillaga Lombard.

Maj. Aspillaga said the DGI was also trying to discredit the presidential campaign of Vice President George Bush because of Mr. Bush's anti-Cuba policies. However, an administration official said no evidence has surfaced that the DGI is trying to influence the U.S. presidential campaign.

Mr. Mica said the government also is investigating romantic encounters between Marine guards at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana and Cuban women, but he added that guards probably didn't betray U.S. secrets.

Mr. Mica said a Cuban defector raised the claims that U.S. intelligence in Cuba had been undermined. He declined to identify the defector or give other details.

"As we were starting to check it, the scope just became astounding," Mr. Mica said. "There is now in pro-

cess a major review of what did we get the last 20 years, who did we get it from, what did we do with it, did it have an effect on foreign policy, did we advise our military and our allies improperly."

Mr. Mica said the Central Intelligence Agency, the Naval Investigative Service, State Department intelligence and the General Accounting Office have been investigating U.S. intelligence on Cuba for several months.

"We're still trying to assess the damage," Mr. Mica said.

Congressional investigators haven't publicized the probes, but Mr. Mica said he agreed to discuss them following disclosures last week that four Marine guards at the U.S. Interests Section in Havana fraternized with Cuban women.

Mr. Mica was in Tampa for a political forum sponsored by the Florida Education Association-United, where he appeared with three other Democrats who are seeking the party's nomination for the U.S. Senate.

Mr. Mica, who went to Moscow to look into Soviet bugging of the U.S. Embassy and the sex-for-secrets scandal involving U.S. Marine

guards there, said he pushed for a probe of embassy security by other unfriendly nations.

"We discovered what appears to be a pattern and practice of bloc countries targeting Marine guards," Mr. Mica said.

The five-term congressman hopes to visit the American diplomatic mission in Havana in the week or two. The United States not have full diplomatic relations with Cuba, but the two countries have interest sections in other countries that carry out diplomatic and immigration functions.

Mr. Mica said there are 23 American staff members at the mission and about 90 Cuban nationals working in clerical and other support roles.

The State Department plans to open an annex in South Miami to handle visas and other clerical duties and allow a reduction in the number of foreign nationals in Havana mission and U.S. embassies in other Latin American nations, Mica said.

Staff writer Gene Grabovec of The Washington Post contributed to this report.

Percentage Increase in
Bubonic and pneumonic deaths
between 1981 and 1986

1981	13
1982	15
1983	17
1984	18
1985	20
1986	22

(including those

Percentage of Increase	Percentage of Increase
20	21
22	18
24	30
26	8
28	17
30	15 to 44 in 1981 and 1986

Percentage of Increase due to AIDS	Percentage of Increase due to AIDS
35	72
40	48
45	26
50	14
55	21

The Washington Times

ected isguise

And women with gynecological infections that don't respond to many therapy should be considered for HIV testing.

be deaths of women [by HIV-related illnesses] may be significantly undercounted because many of survivors long enough to be diagnosed as having the low AIDS used for official counts.

Ms. Norwood wrote in

Iris Davis, outpatient AIDS instructor at Woodhull Hospital in New York.

AMERICA'S BEST TRUCK VALUE

Cuban U.S. 'solid catch' for U.S.



Nirso Pimentel: Cuban efforts 'obvious.'

Ex-newsman: Cuba tried to recruit me

By JAY DUCASSI
Herald Staff Writer

Cuban authorities never approached Nirso Pimentel directly with a request that he work for the Castro government, but their intent to recruit him was "obvious," the former Miami TV news director said Tuesday.

Pimentel, 52, now a spokesman for Metro-Dade's Transit Agency, found himself a celebrity of sorts Tuesday when a Radio Marti broadcast said he was one of the targets Cuban agents had sought to recruit.

"I realized what their intentions were," Pimentel said Tuesday.

As news director of WLTV-Channel 23, Pimentel flew to Cuba in 1978 to cover the dialogue that Fidel Castro sought to establish with Miami's Cuban exiles.

During the flight from Jamaica to Havana, Pimentel said, he was approached by a Cuban official named Virgilio Lora.

"He started talking about the beauties of Cuba, and I thought to myself, 'I don't want to talk to this guy,'" Pimentel remembered.

Lora was "very interested" in details about Channel 23, at the time Miami's only Spanish-language TV station, Pimentel said.

Pimentel said he thought any direct effort to recruit him would come after he had accepted "gifts and favors" from the government. So, he said, he never accepted anything.

Then, sometime in 1985, Lora dropped in for a surprise visit — at Pimentel's Southwest Dade home. At the time, Pimentel was working as a radio reporter.

Pimentel said he declined an invitation to have dinner with Lora, and the consular officer left.

In July, the State Department ordered Lora and another Cuban diplomat to leave the country.

Pimentel said there was never any direct approach by Cuban officials to give him money in exchange for information or for doing stories favorable to the Castro government.

"I would never have allowed it," he said. "But everything was very obvious."

DIPLOMAT / from 1A

are "totally legal."

"We are not involved in any activity outside of our normal diplomatic functions," the spokesman said, adding that Azpillaga "is trying to sell himself higher to those who are paying him to talk."

Two administration sources familiar with U.S. intelligence assessments said they had frequently been cited by the Pentagon's intelligence officers, described Azpillaga as an important defector who brought detailed, accurate and valuable information about covert Cuban operations in the United States and elsewhere.

The officials said that Azpillaga had been a major in the Cuban counterintelligence service and served as chief of intelligence services in Czechoslovakia, with a base at the Cuban Embassy in the capital, Prague.

Other administration and congressional officials said that at one time in Havana, Azpillaga had been head or a member of the so-called American targets unit of the Cuban General Intelligence Directorate (DGI). The unit directs efforts to spy on the U.S. Interests Section in Havana.

European spymaster?

The congressional official briefed by U.S. intelligence officials said Azpillaga also might have run Cuban agents based in Western Europe from Czechoslovakia.

The official said the Czechoslovak city of Bratislava, just 35 miles from Vienna, the Austrian capital, is considered to be a base for officers who direct agents operating in Western Europe and, sometimes, the United States.

From Bratislava, the source said, Soviet bloc case officers visit Austria to meet with agents, pass instructions to them and receive information from them.

A source close to the Cuban government said Azpillaga had been based in Bratislava but only as a low-level consular official who "took care of the consular needs" of Cuban students in the area.

With a population of 281,000, Bratislava is an important oil, chemical and textile center in Czechoslovakia where young Cubans often are trained in industrial activities, U.S. officials said.

The officials said that Azpillaga also served in Prague.

In his earlier interviews with Radio Marti, Azpillaga said he had run Cuban agents in several countries and that he was prepared to identify for U.S. officials the names of 350 Cuban agents in a number of countries, including the United States.

The Cuban also said that he had participated in at least 55 counterintelligence operations against the CIA, working with double agents, had worked as chief of Cuban radio counterin-

telligence and had served in Angola for a year.

On Radio Marti Monday, Azpillaga said that Cuban intelligence officers did much of their recruiting through such organizations as Areito, a magazine sympathetic to, Castro founded in Puerto Rico in the early 1960s and revived the following year. He said they also went through the Brigada, a magazine, which organizes trips by Americans to Cuba, and the Center for Cuban Studies, a cultural organization based in New York that arranges trips by professionals and artists to Cuba. (The center is not related to Miami's Institute for Cuban Studies.)

The claims were hotly denied by Andres Gomez, the editor of Areito.

"I do not know the reasons why this person who says he is a major in Cuban intelligence is saying these things," he said. "Everything we have done throughout these years is legal. I'm sure if it had not been legal, the U.S. intelligence service would have acted a long time ago."

"This is for political consumption in Miami. No one else would believe this except people in Miami. Two months ago he would have been regarded as a criminal by most people in the Cuban community and the administration. Now everything he says is believed as the absolute truth."

Shortly after Azpillaga began airing his allegations through Radio Marti, U.S. intelligence sources told reporters in Washington that Azpillaga had told them that a number of Cuban government officials the CIA believed were working for the United States were in reality Cuban agents who had fed misleading information to the CIA.

'More like a cop'

But one former U.S. counterintelligence expert warned that Azpillaga could be misleading U.S. officials. The expert, who once held a high level U.S. intelligence position, said he did not believe Azpillaga's activities denoted a high-ranking Cuban intelligence officer, but more likely a security specialist in charge of ensuring the safety of Cuban diplomats and other Cuban personnel in Czechoslovakia.

"He sounds more like a cop to me than a major counterintelligence agent," the expert said.

The expert compared Azpillaga to Anatoly Golitsyn, a famous Soviet defector who showed up at the home of the CIA station chief in Helsinki, Finland, on Dec. 22, 1961.

Golitsyn was later accused of having been a disinformation agent of the KGB because he made often unsubstantiated allegations that the CIA and other Western intelligence services were riddled with Soviet moles.

Staff writers Lourdes Meluza in Miami and R.A. Zaldivar in Washington contributed to this report.